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**First 5 Santa Clara County Commission Contributes Additional \$1 Million
to Santa Clara County's Healthy Kids Program**

Commissioners Help Uninsured Children Ages 0 through 5 in Santa Clara County

(SAN JOSE, CA) – The First 5 Santa Clara County Commission today approved a \$1 million contribution to the Santa Clara County Healthy Kids Program for universal health care. Funds will provide health insurance to approximately 900 children ages 0 through 5 in Santa Clara County, in addition to outreach and education efforts.

“We want to build on our successes,” said Blanca Alvarado, chair of First 5 Santa Clara County Commission. “Since 2001, the First 5 Santa Clara County Commission has provided \$2 million each year to the Healthy Kids Program. As a result, more than 3,000 previously uninsured young children now receive medical, dental and vision care services. With this additional funding, we’re helping more young children enter school healthy and ready to reach their greatest potential in school and in life.”

The largest portion of the \$1 million contribution will be used to pay for health insurance premiums of approximately 900 children from birth through age 5 who enroll in the program in 2003. Another portion of the contribution will provide health insurance premium assistance to families unable to make co-payments due to low income, the high cost of living in Santa Clara County or other barriers. A family’s share of the premium amounts from \$4 per child to a maximum of \$18 per month for a family. First 5 Santa Clara County Commission funds will also provide for a full-time staff member and one part-time staff member to help enroll more young children into the program through outreach to child care centers in Santa Clara County.

“We continue to see people who were in high-paying jobs, but have now lost their jobs and are unable to provide health insurance for their children,” said Leona Butler, CEO Santa Clara Family Health Plan. “With the help of the First 5 Santa Clara County Commission, we can continue to provide comprehensive medical, dental and vision coverage to our youngest, most vulnerable children.”

(more)

The First 5 Santa Clara County Commission was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs to promote early childhood development for children through age 5. The Commission receives approximately \$23 million annually for programs that meet local needs, such as the Healthy Kids Program.

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